United Nations A/ES-10/PV.38

General Assembly
Emergency Special Session

Official Records

38th meeting
Wednesday, 13 June 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Resumption of the tenth emergency special session

The President: I declare the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, on illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, resumed.

Members will recall that, in paragraph 4 of its resolution ES-10/19 of 21 December 2017, the General Assembly decided

> "to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States".

I should like to draw the attention of delegations to document A/ES-10/786, which contains a letter dated 8 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Arab States, and the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, requesting the resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

I intend to conduct the proceedings of this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and past practice of the tenth emergency special session.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (Article 19 of the Charter) (A/ES-10/787)

The President: In keeping with established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/787, concerning Member States that are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

The President: In that connection, I should like to recall that at the 37th plenary meeting of the tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly decided to follow the provisions of resolution 72/2, by which the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia are permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-second session and to allow these Member States to vote at the emergency special session.

Agenda item 5 (*continued*)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.23)

Draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express our warmest thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, for reconvening this tenth emergency special session during the very delicate and critical conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, a situation that represents a threat to international peace and security. This meeting is convened in response to the urgent call of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), in accordance with the decisions of the Arab Ministerial Council held in Cairo on 17 May and the OIC Summit held in Istanbul on 18 May. Let me also express our thanks and gratitude to all Member States that supported the reconvening of this emergency special session in line with their consistent position on the just question of Palestine.

I will not take up too much of the Assembly's time, and will not quote the terrifying numbers of people killed and wounded in the peaceful demonstrations where they were confronted with iron and fire. That act of aggression not only did not spare Palestinian civilians, especially children and women, it also attacked nurses, journalists and humanitarian workers, such as volunteer nurse Razan Al-Najjar, a 21-year-old woman whose only sin was saving the injured. In her last interview, talking about the steadfastness of the Palestinian people, she said:

> "I am here in the field. I have been volunteering since the beginning of the demonstrations for the right of return. The very first day I provided first aid to 170 casualties. It is my duty as a young person and a nurse to defend my homeland. I am working to save the lives of Palestinian youth who came out to uphold their homeland. I have the strength, courage and determination to save an entire people."

The Palestinian voice is the voice of right. It is striving only for freedom, independence and a life of dignity. It calls only for the implementation of international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy that the Assembly has adopted unanimously as a natural right for all human beings.

Israel has not only abandoned its responsibilities and obligations as an occupying Power in accordance with international law, it has systematically violated them. In a premeditated way, it has harmed and targeted Palestinian civilians and denied them their most basic rights in a flagrant violation of international law. That leaves the international community duty-bound to meet its obligations and commitments in order to give international protection to the Palestinian civilians living under occupation. The draft resolution we are voting on today therefore implies that the international community will fulfil its responsibility for providing protection to civilians during an armed conflict.

It is my honour today to introduce draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, on behalf of the Group of Arab States and in my capacity as its Chair for this month. The draft resolution urges that international protection be provided to Palestinian civilians in a text that calls for all parties to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It stresses the importance of taking appropriate steps in order to ensure civilians' safety, well-being and protection. It calls for those responsible for all violations to be held accountable. It also denounces any action that could incite violence or endanger civilians' lives. It calls for the utmost restraint and calm on the part of all parties, as well as the need to take significant immediate teps to stabilize the situation on the ground. It also calls for immediate steps to be taken to end the siege that Israel has now imposed on the Gaza Strip for 11 years, so as to ensure unimpeded humanitarian assistance and Palestinians' right of freedom of movement.

The draft resolution calls on the Secretary-General to address the current situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory and to present a written report as soon as possible and no later than 60 days from its adoption, including his proposals on ways and means to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation and to set up an international protection mechanism.

In the light of the latest developments and the inability of the Security Council to meet its responsibilities, the international community is called on to take on its full responsibilities, redouble its efforts to protect the Palestinian people and continue to work to end the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, on the basis of the principle of land for peace. That would enable the Palestinian people to set up an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, in line with the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

On behalf of the Group of Arab States and all the sponsors, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude for the great efforts that our sister State of Kuwait made to submit draft resolution S/2018/516 to the Security Council and mobilize support for it. We thank all the Member States that voted in favour of the draft resolution and salute them for their principled position on this issue. Let me also thank all delegations that have joined us in sponsoring the draft resolution before the Assembly today and supporting the principles it contains, in a reflection of their steadfast positions on the rule of law and the Charter of the United Nations. We call on all peace-loving States, all States that genuinely want peace, to stand firm on the side of the rule of law and to support this draft resolution and vote in favour of it — in favour of what is right and of achieving peace and stability in the Middle East and the entire world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): There are many terrible things happening in the world today, many things that demand our urgent attention. As we speak, protests are taking place in Nicaragua. More than 146 peaceful Nicaraguans have been killed by their own Government in the past two months, but we are not talking about Nicaragua today. The people of Iran have been protesting their Government for months. Thousands of peaceful Iranian protesters have been arrested, and more than 25 are dead, but we are not talking about Iran, either. The world's worst humanitarian crisis is going on right now in Yemen, where millions are at risk for starvation. In Burma, almost a million innocent people have been driven from their homes in a campaign of ethnic cleansing. But we are not talking about Yemen or Burma.

Instead, the General Assembly is devoting its valuable time today to the situation in Gaza. Gaza is an important international matter, but what makes it different from or more urgent than the conflicts in Nicaragua, Iran, Yemen, Burma and many other desperate places? We have not gathered here to discuss any of those urgent issues, although the United States would welcome that. What makes Gaza different for some is that attacking Israel is their favourite political sport. That is why we are here today.

The nature of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23 clearly demonstrates that politics is driving the day. It is totally one-sided. It makes not one mention of Hamas, which routinely initiates violence in Gaza. Such one-sided resolutions at the United Nations do nothing to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Everyone recognizes that. But advancing peace is not the goal of this draft resolution. I suspect that even my Turkish friends know that its adoption will change nothing, but what they believe is that it looks good for the people back home to think that they are doing something. That is pure politics.

The fact is that this draft resolution makes peace less possible. It feeds a narrative to the desperate people of Gaza that their leaders are not responsible for their predicament. It stokes hatred. It sacrifices honesty, accuracy, compromise and reconciliation in favour of the advancement of a narrow political agenda.

If we were being honest, we would acknowledge that there are no perfect actors on either side of this conflict. It does no one any good to pretend that all the blame lies on one side. I wish that everyone supporting this one-sided draft resolution would put as much energy into encouraging President Abbas to come to the negotiating table as they do into falsely implying to their people back home that they are doing something.

Israel withdrew completely from Gaza in 2005, and Hamas has been the de facto Government there since 2007. This strip of land along the Mediterranean coast has enormous potential. And yet after 11 years of Hamas rule, Gaza has electricity for only a few hours a day. It has enormous unemployment and poverty. It is a haven for terrorist activity. At what point will the United Nations actually hold accountable those who are in charge of Gaza and running it into the ground?

Instead, this draft resolution holds Hamas completely unaccountable for most of the recent unrest and blames everything on Israel. But the facts tell a different story. It is Hamas and its allies that have fired more than 100 rockets into Israel in the past month, hoping to kill as many civilians and cause as much destruction as possible. It is Hamas that has used Palestinian civilians as human shields at the boundary fence, seeking to incite violence and overrun the border. It is Hamas that refuses to cooperate with the Palestinian Authority to unite in the pursuit of peace. It is Hamas that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel within any borders. And yet the draft resolution before us not only fails to

blame Hamas for those actions, it fails to even mention Hamas. That is the dangerous and counterproductive decision the General Assembly is about to take.

But there is still a chance for this organ to try to right that wrong. We still have the opportunity to salvage something honest from the discussion. The United States is offering a draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) to the draft resolution that provides a small step in the direction of balance. Our amendment rightly condemns Hamas' indiscriminate firing of rockets into Israeli civilian communities. It accurately condemns the diversion of aid and resources from civilian needs into military infrastructure, including terror tunnels used to attack Israeli citizens. It justly expresses our grave concerns about damage done to border crossings that is hindering the delivery of desperately needed food and fuel to the people of Gaza. It is a modest amendment that reflects the minimum truth of what is going on in Gaza. It is the least that any self-respecting international organization, or nation, can do for the cause of peace.

To those who are unsure about how to vote, I ask: What part of our amendment is objectionable? Is it objectionable to condemn Hamas for firing rockets at civilians? Is it objectionable to condemn the diversion of resources from civilians to military uses, or to express concern about the destruction of border crossings that deliver life-saving supplies?

Today's choice for the General Assembly is simple. It is the choice between using our time here to advance peace and security or to stoke hatred and conflict. The vote will tell us much about which countries are serious about accuracy and reconciliation, and which countries are bound by their political agendas. For the sake of peace, and for the sake of the institution, I urge my colleagues to support the United States amendment.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting in response to the urgent request to resume the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to address the severe protection crisis that continues to be faced by the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and particularly at this time in the besieged and blockaded Gaza Strip. We appreciate the seriousness with which that request has been expressed at the initiative of the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and are deeply grateful to all the countries supporting that principled effort, including by sponsoring draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, which is now before the Assembly.

That initiative represents a genuine effort to address the recent escalation of violence and the worsening conditions on the ground, and it is firmly based on the belief that by upholding shared responsibilities, in line with the Charter, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, we can contribute to the efforts to defuse tensions, de-escalate the situation, prevent further violence and protect civilian lives.

Our decision to approach the Assembly was prompted by the Security Council's failure to act, due to the veto cast on 1 June by a permanent member (see S/PV.8274). That prevented the adoption of draft resolution S/2018/516, submitted by Kuwait and supported by a majority of Council members with a view to advancing the consideration of measures to guarantee the safety, well-being and protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation.

On the heels of that regrettable vote in the Security Council, last week we sombrely marked the fifty-first anniversary of Israel's occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories in 1967. We were reminded again of the decades of failed attempts to bring an end to that occupation, realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom, and establish a just peace based on the long-standing international consensus enshrined in the relevant United Nations resolutions.

That illegal, belligerent military occupation is the primary source and root cause of the recurring and emergent crisis we face, and it is the stark backdrop for our continued appeals to the international community for assistance and intervention. As the occupation intensifies in its brutality — witnessed every single day in the oppression, intimidation and humiliation of Palestinian men, women and children by the Israeli occupying forces and extremist settlers — and as the dangerous political impasse persists, the importance of protecting our people under that occupation remains urgent and unquestionable.

While we clearly would have preferred to see the Security Council take on its duties, the negative outcome has only emboldened Israel's impunity, further endangering Palestinian lives. We have therefore been

compelled to continue our efforts in the United Nations system to secure protection for our people. We cannot remain silent in the face of the violent crimes and human rights violations that are being systematically perpetrated against our people. No one could. We will continue to do everything possible to protect our people. That is the right of all people, and the Palestinian people should not be the exception.

Faced with the occupying forces' recent killing of 129 Palestinian civilians, including 16 children, and injury of more than 13,600, mainly as a result of lethal assaults against peaceful civilian protesters in Gaza; with the inhumane oppression and collective punishment of 2 million Palestinians under Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has resulted in humanitarian devastation and brought the situation there to the brink of collapse; and with our people's incessant, cruel repression and displacement and the destructive settlement colonization of our land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem — as we are witnessing currently in Khan Al-Ahmar and Abu Al-Helu, where Palestinian Bedouin families, more than half of whom are children, are facing the mass demolition of their homes and properties, including schools, and the forced transfer of the entire community — an outcry and outrage do not suffice.

To condemn, regret or express concern is not enough. We need action and the protection of our civilian population. Why would that offend anyone? We are only asking for a simple thing. We want our civilian population to be protected. Is that a crime?

It is our duty to address all aspects of this crisis and its grave injustice, and to alleviate the suffering of our people in any way we can, as we have repeatedly committed to doing through all available, peaceful and legal means. We ask for the Assembly's invaluable solidarity and support in this endeavour. The General Assembly has always stood with oppressed peoples suffering and struggling to end colonialism, and we trust that it will continue to be on the side of the Palestinian people and their desire to live in freedom and dignity in their homeland, after we end the Israeli occupation of the land of our State and can enjoy our independence and thereby save a two-State solution, with East Jerusalem as the capital of our State.

As has been said, the draft resolution before the Assembly is intended to help to de-escalate the volatile situation, to prevent violence against civilians and promote the consideration of measures to protect Palestinian civilians. That process begins with a request to the Secretary-General to submit a report in that regard, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism. In the meantime, the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process are urged to continue engaging with concerned partners in the efforts to address urgent humanitarian and economic development needs, in particular in Gaza, which we strongly encourage all to support.

The draft resolution is rooted in international law and United Nations resolutions on the Palestine question and on the protection of civilians. The concept of the protection of civilians was invented in the West, and mainly in Europe. It is a Western concept. The West fights everywhere to see civilians protected everywhere. It should not exclude the Palestinian people from enjoying protection as well.

The draft resolution addresses all the relevant dimensions of the current crisis, including violence on both sides, with an unequivocal condemnation of all acts of violence against civilians. We say that, but some think only of one party and totally ignore the Palestinian people, as if they had no rights or were not part of humankind. That is unacceptable. It is one-sided and not balanced. The draft resolution is balanced and was reached after extensive negotiations during the process of negotiating in good faith the Security Council draft resolution and the follow-up consultations and outreach, which sought the support of all delegations. We therefore firmly reject the bad-faith attempt to insert a draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) that would radically unbalance the text and shift the Assembly's focus away from the core objective of protecting civilians and upholding international law.

We call on all delegations to reject the politicization of this serious issue. Introducing this amendment at the last minute and attempting to abuse the innocent, principled position held by many is tantamount to allowing everyone to submit amendments. If our motives are genuine and we negotiate in good faith, we submit our amendments early in the ballgame, negotiate in good faith and express the desire and willingness to be on board because we want the draft resolution to be adopted.

I do not think that the very sophisticated diplomats in this Hall will buy these last-minute games and

gimmicks that try to make it seem that someone truly wants to be balanced. As someone has said in this Hall, there are no Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts in this business. All the representatives are very sophisticated diplomats. They know the real thing and know the games and the gimmicks. We trust them fully to do the right thing and to recognize those who try at the last minute, for the sake of expediency, to fool the Assembly by introducing amendments that are in bad faith because they are not genuine. If they were, the representatives submitting them would have engaged from the beginning in the Security Council, and we would be in a different place from the one we are in today.

The reality is that the draft resolution is a responsible yet very modest effort, especially considering the severity, extent and protracted nature of the protection crisis and nightmare being endured by Palestinians young and old under Israel's occupation and the more than 70 years of the Nakba.

We appeal for the support of all delegations, consistent with long-standing, principled positions on the Palestine question and the historic efforts of the international community to ensure the application of international law to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to advance the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution. We also urge all concerned States to engage in the efforts to remedy the prevailing crisis, including by supporting the United Nations agencies on the ground that are working day and night to meet humanitarian needs, particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and by sharing relevant proposals with the Secretary-General in support of the fulfilment of his mandate.

We urge that everything possible be done to uphold the collective obligation to protect civilians in all circumstances, including Palestinian civilians, and to avert further destabilization of the situation with a view to salvaging the prospects for peace, to which we remain committed and for which we have not yet lost all hope.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): We requested that this emergency special session be reconvened today because the Security Council failed to adopt draft resolution S/2018/516, which called for the protection of Palestinian civilians, owing to the veto of our American friends. That is the reason why Turkey, in its capacity as Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, co-submitted draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, on which the Assembly will now take action.

Let us be clear about what the draft resolution before us is and is not. It is a call to all States Members of the United Nations to alleviate human suffering, a call to seek peaceful means to deter and prevent attacks on civilians. It sides with international law. It is about supporting de-escalation on the ground and deterring further attacks on civilians. It is a call to the Secretary-General to come up with recommendations on how to protect civilians from further attacks. It is a call to all the parties to end the loss of life.

The draft resolution does not seek to target anyone. It seeks collective responsibility in support of international law, including all the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. It is about choosing the side of a credible peace process. It is about keeping the hopes for peaceful coexistence alive.

This is the right time to send a convincing signal to the Palestinian people that their legitimate aspirations have been heard and that the international community does care about their suffering. This is the right time for the General Assembly to restore the credibility of the United Nations by assuming its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations and by showing that the acquis on the Palestinian issue is more than just words.

Despite persistent international protests, the Palestinians are still deprived of their inalienable rights. Their legitimate aspirations to statehood are still not fulfilled. They are faced with efforts to erode the established parameters for a lasting peace. Now, to top it all, their right to peaceful protest is being blatantly violated. As we gather here today, we have a common duty to prevent any further erosion of international law. We must show that we are united in upholding the principles of international law and the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Our expectation with respect to the draft resolution before us is clear and I shall repeat it. We request the Secretary-General to submit a report containing his proposals on ways and means of ensuring the protection of civilians, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism to prevent and deter attacks on Palestinian civilians. This represents only a modest step in the right direction after weeks of violence and huge loss of life.

Asking for United Nations action is choosing multilateralism over unilateralism. That is what the draft resolution is about. Unilateral decisions will not bring peace; only a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement can do that. The parameters are well known to all of us. A negotiated settlement for two States that will lead to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, remains the only way to lay the foundations for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace between two States, Palestine and Israel, living side by side. If peace is what we all want, there is no alternative to that.

We see that one country has introduced a draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) in order to create confusion among the membership. The draft resolution before us today has been carefully drafted through several rounds of negotiations in the Security Council. The Council's failure to act on this vital matter is the reason we are here today. Members will recall that the amendments that became a draft resolution of the Council (S/2018/520) on 1 June were also rejected (see S/PV.8274). I therefore ask the Assembly to do the same and refrain from supporting the consideration of this or any other amendment.

As we vote on the draft resolution, we must stand on the right side of history and act for the peace and dignity of all.

Mr. Danon (Israel): I am honoured to stand here today, and to stand up here to represent Israel at every United Nations forum and in every United Nations hall. I am honoured because I would rather speak in this Hall every single day in defence of my people than give even one eulogy for one Israeli killed by Hamas. That is why I am here today to stand up for a basic right afforded to every country in the world, the right to defend its citizens.

The General Assembly has convened two meetings of the tenth emergency session in the past six months, both related to Israel. The first was about Jerusalem (see A/ES-10/PV.37). It was the international community's attempt to take away the right to determine our own capital. Today's meeting is about our right to defend our people. It is the international community's attempt to take away our basic right to defend ourselves.

Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, which is before the Assembly today, does not protect innocent Palestinians. It does not protect Israelis. It does not condemn or even mention Hamas, the terror group directly responsible for the violence in our region. By supporting the draft resolution, members are colluding with a terrorist organization. By supporting this draft resolution, the Assembly is empowering Hamas.

Over the past two months, we have heard from some of the world's worst offenders about the so-called Palestinian Great March of Return. Ismail Haniya, the head of Hamas, President Erdoğan of Turkey and others have expressed their support for such attacks against Israel. In fact, the draft resolution was introduced just now by Turkey and Algeria, not exactly two champions of human rights. The draft resolution is nothing more than a twisted stamp of approval for terrorism. It seems that certain leaders will call for a meeting of the emergency special session branding Israel as a scapegoat in order to satisfy the political basis for an upcoming election.

The name of the riots tells members of the Assembly everything that they need to know. The rioters are not marching with the intention of returning to Gaza or even to Judea and Samaria. What does it mean when they say "return"? They want to seize Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem and replace the Jewish State. We take them at their word, and we pledge to ensure that they do not succeed.

The so-called Great March of Return was not a march at all. It was a violent assault on Israel by Hamas. The Palestinians claimed that it was a peaceful protest. Members heard that. Let me therefore ask: when someone plants explosives on the fence that separates Gaza and Israel, is that peaceful? When someone throws Molotov cocktails or fires weapons, is that peaceful? When Hamas launches hundreds of rockets at Israeli civilians, is that peaceful? When one Hamas mortar shells hits a kindergarten, is that a peaceful protest? Hamas even uses children's toys as weapons. It has turned kites into bombs and sent them over the fence, igniting more than 400 fires in Israel. Some 4,400 acres of Israeli agricultural fields were set aflame.

Members should ask themselves how they would react if 40,000 rioters calling for their destruction tried to storm their borders. They should think about their country and their borders for a moment. What if the United Nations then called for an emergency special meeting to condemn their country for defending itself? What would they do and say if they were standing here in my place? Just imagine what would have happened

had the 40,000 rioters in Gaza succeeded in breaching the fence. The world would have witnessed numerous Israeli and Palestinian casualties.

Last month, Hamas claimed responsibility for 85 per cent of those killed during a day of rioting. Some members of the Security Council stood in solidarity with those confirmed terrorists. It is not I but the Hamas leaders who say that. They actually attempted to adopt a draft resolution (S/2018/516) blaming Israel for the crimes of Hamas. It was not adopted, thanks to the United States and other brave countries that did not support it. However, because it is about Israel, it is still being discussed within the General Assembly. It is about time to expose the falsehoods of the situation in Gaza and draw the clearest possible demarcation between right and wrong. Anyone supporting draft resolution A/ES-20/L.23 is supporting Hamas.

Let us set the record straight concerning the facts. First, the Palestinian rioters were neither unarmed or defenceless. Secondly, the true root cause of the violent riots of recent weeks was the terrorism orchestrated by Hamas. It was Hamas that decided when to attack, when to retreat and when to send its own people straight into harm's way and even to their deaths. Thirdly, it is Hamas that is recognized as a terrorist organization by Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the European Union, Japan, the United Kingdom, Egypt and the United States. Lastly, and let me make this very clear, the only country facing a double standard on the world stage and here in the General Assembly is Israel.

The General Assembly today seeks to join the so-called Human Rights Council in Geneva in adopting a grossly biased draft resolution condemning Israel. That is the same Council that has one permanent agenda item for condemning Israel and just one other item for every other conflict in the world.

The hypocrisy of the General Assembly should come as no surprise. Last year alone, the Assembly adopted 20 resolutions condemning Israel. There have been 10 emergency special sessions of the General Assembly since the founding of the United Nations. Five of the 10 were on Israel. The current tenth session concerns Israel. It was first convened in April 1997 and it has been open for more than 20 years. This session has been reconvened 18 times, including today. It is not just a mockery of the United Nations, it is abuse and misuse of the United Nations.

Just for comparison's sake, the devastation in Syria, which has claimed 500,000 lives and displaced 7 million people, has never resulted in an emergency special session of the General Assembly. This type of worldwide assault is reserved only for Israel. It is not criticism. It is not a difference in opinion on policy. It is anti-Semitism.

Israel has gone to great lengths to improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Despite the fact that we fully withdrew from Gaza in 2005, Israel facilitates the transfer of hundreds of tons of goods into Gaza every single day. It is Hamas that destroyed the crossing enabling the entry of those goods. It is Hamas that steals international aid, the money that Member States give to Gaza. It is Hamas that in 2017 spent $260 million on terrorism. Yet it is Hamas that is not even mentioned in today's draft resolution.

I ask everyone, including the Ambassador of Turkey, why it was not possible to include Hamas in the draft resolution. I ask the Ambassadors of Algeria, Bangladesh and Venezuela to read the draft resolution. Do they support terrorism? Do they support suicide bombers?

Hamas was not alone in generating the conflict. Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President, has refused to pay Palestinian Authority employees in Gaza for months. While Israel works with the United Nations and others to promote development projects in Gaza, Abbas and the Palestinian Authority hold progress back. Israel wants to help the residents of Gaza, but humanitarian gestures must go both ways. We will not rest until Avera Mangistu, Hisham Al-Sayed and the bodies of Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin are returned safely to Israel.

The situation along the fence with Gaza is very clear. Israel is a democracy defending itself. Hamas is a terrorist organization attacking Israelis and Palestinians. If the United Nations adopts this draft resolution, it will therefore have signed in writing its unequivocal support for terrorism against Israel.

Let us not pretend. If the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) were to attack Stockholm tomorrow, ISIS would be held responsible for the attack. If Al-Qaida assaulted Paris, the United Nations would issue the strongest condemnation of Al-Qaida. Only when Hamas attacks Israel does the United Nations seek to blame Israel. The moral majority in this Hall should not tolerate a different standard for Israeli victims of

terror. I have a simple message for those who support the draft resolution today. They are the ammunition for Hamas's guns and the warheads for Hamas's missiles.

We will continue to do everything in our power to save innocent lives on both sides of the fence, but let us make no mistake. Israel will never compromise when it comes to the safety of our citizens and defending our country. A vote for this draft resolution is a vote for Hamas.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): I am honoured to address the General Assembly today in my capacity as the Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) group at the United Nations.

We thank you, Sir, for convening this tenth emergency special session. Bangladesh is currently the Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, and in May hosted the forty-fifth session of the Council in Dhaka. Once again the question of Palestine was among the central issues addressed, and the Organization's core positions — which are firmly rooted in international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and our principled, long-standing solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause — were clearly reaffirmed.

The OIC remains extremely alarmed about the grave situation endured by the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of the ongoing illegal and repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In recent weeks, we have witnessed anguishing scenes of human suffering, especially in the Gaza Strip, as Israeli occupying forces have continued a violent onslaught against unarmed Palestinian civilians peacefully protesting against the Israeli occupation and blockade while calling for respect for their inalienable human rights. We condemn such deliberate, systematic and unlawful use of force against civilians, which has resulted in the killing of at least 129 Palestinians, including 16 children, and caused injury to more than 13,600 civilians, many of whom have been permanently disabled.

The crisis has further traumatized the Palestinian people and further exacerbated the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where poverty, food insecurity and unemployment have reached extreme levels and the health, sanitation and energy sectors are near collapse, creating a completely unsustainable, inhumane and explosive situation. We have heard repeated warnings in that regard that compel us to act responsibly and urgently under international law and in accordance with our humanitarian obligations.

The OIC therefore once again calls for measures to be taken based on international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, to ensure desperately needed international protection for the Palestinian people. As Israel persists in breaching international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law, and in continuing its flagrant violations of United Nations resolutions, silence in the face of such crimes and human suffering is inexcusable. We must act now to alleviate the immense suffering of the Palestinian people and bring an end to the illegal occupation and historic injustice.

We deeply regret the failure of the recent initiative in the Security Council (see S/PV.8274) calling for action in this regard, owing to the veto cast by a permanent member of the Council. Such an outcome has not only undermined serious efforts to address the crisis in a manner that would de-escalate the high tensions and protect defenceless civilians, it has also further encouraged Israel, the occupying Power, to continue its aggressions against the Palestinian people with total impunity.

We have recently witnessed once again the continuing brutality of the Israeli occupying forces, without fear of accountability, killing an additional four Palestinians, including one child, and injuring at least 600 other civilians, including women and children, in Gaza. That is in addition to the killing of a Palestinian youth in the West Bank and to the advancement of further settlement colonization measures, especially in and around occupied East Jerusalem, and to attempts to forcibly displace Palestinian civilians, including hundreds of vulnerable Bedouin families from Khan Al-Ahmar. That is a shocking reflection of just the past week and of only some of the countless violations and crimes perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation.

In the light of the grave situation and in accordance with the decisions by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers and the seventh extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, the OIC and the Group of Arab States have embarked on a joint initiative, together with other countries, in sponsoring draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, now before the Assembly. We appeal urgently to all delegations for their principled support. With

its call to the Secretary-General to act, this initiative constitutes a serious effort, albeit a first step, towards ensuring much-needed protection for the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

We urge support for this draft resolution as an immediate contribution to deterring violence against all civilians, de-escalating the dangerous tensions and ensuring calm and restraint, while alleviating the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and protecting and saving civilian lives. It is imperative that we act to achieve those pressing objectives, which are also vital to creating an environment conducive to the advancement of our decades-long efforts to achieve a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution pursuant to the relevant United Nations resolutions, and to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to live in freedom, security and dignity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is with a great sense of responsibility that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela speaks on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) at this emergency special session to address the question of Palestine, a subject to which we have historically attached particular importance.

First of all, NAM reaffirms once again its unfailing solidarity with the Palestinian people and unwavering support for their just cause. The situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is alarming. Recent acts of violence perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, have only intensified the tensions, suffering and despair, especially in Gaza, increasing the need to take action to save civilian lives through measures to ensure their protection and alleviate the dire humanitarian crisis produced by the Israeli blockade, which has devastated Gaza and must be immediately and completely lifted.

Since 30 March, Palestinian civilians, in the exercise of the their right to peaceful protest, have been participating in the Great March of Return, a peaceful civilian protest against Israel's illegal occupation, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people, which has lasted for more than 50 years. Tragically, in the course of those peaceful protests, more than 125 Palestinians have been killed, including 15 children, and approximately 14,000 civilians have been injured by the occupying forces. The States members of the Movement reiterate their categorical condemnation of the killing of Palestinian civilians by the Israeli occupying forces.

It should also be noted that the killing of more than 60 of those Palestinians, including children, took place on 14 May, the very day of the provocative and unilateral move of the Embassy of the United States of America in Israel from Tel Aviv to the city of Jerusalem, in violation of the Security Council resolutions on that matter. As we have reaffirmed on other occasions, such provocative and unilateral actions will only increase tensions, with potentially far-reaching repercussions.

That atrocious massacre was the result of the criminal brutality of the occupation forces of the occupying Power, which used disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians with live ammunition, in violation of international law. The NAM Coordinating Bureau condemns Israel's excessive and disproportionate use of force on civilians and reiterates its support for an independent and transparent investigation of those killings, as well as for international action to ensure accountability and prevent Israel from going unpunished for those atrocities.

The current situation is clearly unsustainable. The tragic events in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are strong evidence of the need for the international community to intensify its efforts to achieve a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects, in conformity with international law. The only way to end the prolonged conflict is through peaceful measures based on a two-State solution within the pre-1967 borders, aimed at establishing a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the lack of accountability for all violations committed by Israel, which fosters impunity and destabilizes the situation on the ground while diminishing the prospects for peace. We therefore continue to call for international action, in particular by the Security Council, to ensure accountability and a halt to violations committed by the occupying Power. Israel must comply with its obligations and responsibilities under international law. The international community must also ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and throughout the occupied Palestinian territory,

including East Jerusalem, so as to resolve the dire state of insecurity of the occupied population and prevent the loss of additional innocent lives, in conformity with humanitarian law and human rights law and pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In that connection, the States members of the Movement want to note that they deeply regret the recent exercise of the right to veto by the delegation of the United States of America on Security Council draft resolution S/2018/516, introduced by the delegation of the State of Kuwait, the goal of which was to address the recent escalation of violence and the urgent need to protect the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular in the Gaza Strip. We are therefore concerned about the inability of the Security Council to fulfil its mandate on this important issue thanks to the fact that the particular interests of a permanent member have been allowed to .

At the same time, NAM reiterates that Israel's killing and maiming of Palestinian civilians cannot be tolerated or justified under any circumstances, and that the occupying Power must fully abide by its obligations under international law. We therefore call for immediate steps to end Israel's closure of the Gaza Strip and its restrictions on it, for ensuring the sustained opening of crossing points for the normal movement and access of persons and goods. The Israeli blockade, which continues to impose unprecedented humanitarian, social and economic suffering on more than 2 million Palestinian children, women and men, must end now.

In that regard, we stress once again that the crisis in Gaza must be comprehensively addressed in accordance with international law, humanitarian law, human rights law and the relevant resolutions, bearing in mind the overall situation of the ongoing foreign illegitimate and belligerent occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, that Israel has perpetrated since 1967, as well as in the context of the unequivocal call for an end to an occupation that has lasted for more than half a century.

NAM respectfully calls on all members of the General Assembly to support the draft resolution presented by the Group of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is in line with the responsibilities of the international community under the Charter of the United Nations; international law, including humanitarian law and human rights law; and relevant resolutions, as well as the collective duty to protect civilians, including children, in situations of armed conflict. The text addresses important issues related to the current crisis, including the violence against civilians, and encourages the serious consideration of measures to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of the Palestinian civilian population, beginning with a request to the Secretary-General to submit a report containing, among other things, his proposals on ways and means towards that end, as well as recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.

Moreover, NAM reaffirms the validity of all relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the question of Palestine and the status of Jerusalem, which are legally binding on all States Members of the United Nations and must therefore be fully and effectively implemented. Respect for those resolutions, in particular resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016), is essential for improving the situation and advancing the prospects for peace. The Security Council must also abide by its obligations under the Charter and act to uphold its own resolutions and maintain its credibility.

In the light of the commemoration this year of the seventieth anniversary of the Nakba, the member States of the Movement reaffirm their full solidarity with the heroic Palestinian people and their unwavering support for their just cause, in their legitimate struggle for justice, dignity, peace and the exercise of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for achieving a just solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III). Today it is more necessary than ever to put an end to the prolonged tragedy and suffering of the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement calls for intensified work to mobilize international efforts, in the framework of a collective process, in order to end without delay the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 as well as to attain a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the question of Palestine on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, while stressing that a peaceful solution to the protracted conflict is essential to making peace and stability in the Middle East and at a global scale a reality.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Adamson (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

We are deeply alarmed about the sharp escalation of violence we have witnessed recently in Gaza, resulting in a high number of Palestinians killed or injured. We underline the pressing need for a political solution on the basis of internationally agreed parameters, leading to a two-State solution. The Security Council has a responsibility for the peace process. All credible efforts to restart the peace process must be supported. We underscore the absolute urgency of addressing the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Gaza and express our firm support to the efforts of United Nations Special Coordinator Mladenov in that regard.

Israel must respect the right to peaceful protests and ensure the use of proportionate measures when protecting its legitimate security interests. We urge all parties to take immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and to act with the utmost restraint in order to avoid further loss of life. Israeli security forces must refrain from the excessive use of force against unarmed civilians. The lethal use of force should be exercised with maximum restraint and only as a last resort to protect life. The use of force taken must be proportionate at all times.

Those leading the protests in Gaza, including Hamas and other groups, have a responsibility to avoid provocations and ensure that they remain strictly non-violent. We condemn the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israel.

We underscore the European Union's clear, consolidated position on Jerusalem as a final-status issue and that we will continue to respect the international consensus on Jerusalem embodied in Security Council resolution 478 (1980), among others, including on the diplomatic representations, until the final status of Jerusalem is resolved.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Seventy years ago the United Nations made two promises to the world. The first created a free, independent and sovereign State of Israel. That promise was kept, and we can now look at Israel's seat and regard it as a full Member of the Organization. The second was to establish a free, independent and sovereign State of Palestine. Regrettably, that promise has not been kept.

We are talking about a promise that has remained unfulfilled for more than 70 years, because the creation of the State of Palestine has not been permitted. We are talking about more than 50 years of Israeli occupation and the continued growth of illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. And we are talking about more than 10 years of an inhumane blockade against Gaza.

Against that backdrop, I want to make a fundamental clarification in order to understand one of the reasons that brings us together today. While there are two parties to the incorrectly termed Israel-Palestine conflict, I want to make it clear that it is not a conflict but rather a situation of illegal occupation in which there is an occupying Power and an occupied territory. It is a situation in which the two parties are not on an equal footing. Israel is the occupying Power and the other side, Palestine, is the occupied people and territory. That is to say, Israel is the oppressor State and Palestine the oppressed people.

There is a historical and undeniable inequality. One of the parties continues to use force to occupy the territory of the other. The Palestinian population is living under the siege of the occupying Power of Israel and its defence forces, and that occupation unquestionably poses a huge obstacle to the protection of the lives of civilians, Israelis as well as Palestinians.

One of the parties has built checkpoints in the occupied Palestinian territories, forcing that population to live in fear on a daily basis. One of the parties, the occupying Power, has built an annexationist wall along the length of the West Bank as part of its colonial and expansionist policies — a wall that, by the way, was declared illegal in 2004 by the International Court of Justice. One of the parties is responsible for the construction of the illegal settlements in the territory of the other. One of the parties is responsible for preventing the return of more than 6 million Palestinian refugees to their homes. Let me to repeat that. One of the parties is responsible for preventing the return of more than 6 million Palestinian refugees to their homes. One of the parties is responsible for detaining hundreds of Palestinian children.

One of the parties is also responsible for Gaza being besieged and blocked by air and sea, and for its insufficient access to basic services such as drinking water and electricity. One of the parties is responsible for the illegal occupation of territories that do not belong to it. It is also responsible for the confiscation of fertile land and water, the demolition of Palestinian homes and the transfer of settlers to illegal settlements built in Palestinian territories. One of the parties imposes a collective punishment on the other.

About two years ago, my country was elected by this great Assembly to be a member of the Security Council. We assumed that responsibility in the belief that by being part of the Council we would contribute to the right of the Palestinian people to live in peace in the territories that belong to them historically and without any fear. Unfortunately, we have been unable to even come close to that aspiration. On the contrary, during our time on the Council, the situation of the Palestinian people has deteriorated. The Israeli Government has increased its policies against the Palestinian people. In other words, I declare to the Assembly that the Security Council has failed in trying to resolve the situation of Palestine.

There is an underlying reason, which is the fact that Israel indirectly enjoys the right of veto through one of the permanent members of the Council. In the past two years, two instances have left us deeply concerned. One of them was the unilateral decision of the United States Government to establish its Embassy in the occupied city of Jerusalem. When the Security Council tried to condemn that illegal decision, it was hindered by the use of the veto by the United States. To that we add what happened on Friday, 1 June (see S/PV.8274), when the United States of America again vetoed a Council draft resolution (S/2018/516). Its main purpose was to provide protection to the Palestinian people, who at the time were being massacred by the Israeli occupation forces. Regrettably, it was also vetoed by the United States.

Unfortunately, historically, the role of the United States of America and its policies in favouring unjust systems that violate human rights is nothing new. In that connection, I would like to quote from an article by the prominent United States linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky in which he refers precisely to the support the United States gives to Israel, the occupying Power. He makes a very interesting comparison between United States support for Israel and the support of the United States for the apartheid regime in South Africa. He states:

(*spoke in English*)

> "However, there is one comparison to South Africa that is realistic — and significant. In 1958, South Africa's Foreign Minister informed the United States Ambassador that it didn't much matter if South Africa became a pariah State. The United Nations may harshly condemn South Africa, he said, but, as the Ambassador put it, 'what mattered perhaps more than all other votes put together was that of [the] United States in view of its predominant position of leadership in [the] Western world.' For 40 years, ever since it chose expansion over security, Israel has made essentially the same judgment."

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In other words, it does not matter that the rest of the Security Council members are in favour of something. It does not matter what the General Assembly has decided through the 20 resolutions that the representative of Israel mentioned, or the five emergency special sessions convened in the Assembly, because in reality what is important is the support — the political and diplomatic cover and economic and military support — of the United States in maintaining the system of the occupation of Palestinian territories, a system that violates and threatens international law.

Today we would like to again express our firm commitment to all international efforts that may lead to a peaceful resolution of the situation of occupation that the Palestinian people are enduring. In that regard, we join initiatives such as the Quartet road map, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative that provide guarantees for a just and lasting peace so that both peoples can live within recognized and secure borders.

We reaffirm our belief that the only long-term solution to the Palestinian occupation situation is a two-State solution whereby a free, sovereign and independent Palestinian State is ultimately consolidated within its pre-1967 international borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resoluuions.

Lastly, I would like to mention that my delegation is honoured to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, which we will vote on today. We know that

one delegation likes to make lists of who is in favour and who is against. But we also must recall that history makes lists, and just as important as history is that our own consciences make lists too.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for reconvening this important tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the issue of the protection of Palestinian civilians, especially children. South Africa believes that today's debate and action on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23 is urgent and timely. The deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, cannot be allowed to continue and remains a blight on the conscience of the international community.

It is unacceptable that the Security Council has once again failed to act in response to the escalating violence in Gaza and to protect the civilian population of the occupied Palestinian territories against the illegal and disproportionate use of force by the Israel Defense Forces. The General Assembly must therefore now take on the moral and legal obligation to act effectively to protect the people living in Palestine and the other occupied territories and assume its responsibilities by taking urgent measures to remedy the situation.

Over the past few weeks, we have witnessed a violent act of aggression carried out by the Israeli armed forces along the Gaza border, leading to the death of dozens of civilians who were taking part in a peaceful protest against the inauguration of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem. The inability of the Security Council to agree on action to protect civilians in Gaza should not absolve the entire United Nations membership as a whole from that responsibility. The General Assembly, as the most representative organ of the United Nations, should act as the moral conscience of the international community and should not shrink from acting when the organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security has been unable to act, as has been the case.

We therefore believe that it is imperative that the Assembly vote in favour of the draft resolution before us today. South Africa believes that the draft resolution rightly condemns the escalation of violence as well as the loss of civilian lives, including casualties among children, caused by the Israeli forces. Furthermore, the draft resolution is based on international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine. The draft resolution makes reference to the protection of civilians, including children, in armed conflict, as well as the protection of humanitarian personnel and journalists. We also fully support the request to the Secretary-General to submit a report containing proposals on ways and means to that end, as well as to make recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.

South Africa reiterates that the only way to bring about genuine and everlasting peace between Israel and Palestine is by engaging in comprehensive and unconditional negotiations to deal with all final-status issues, including the issue of Jerusalem, the unrelenting expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories of Palestine, the lifting of the illegal Gaza blockade and the ongoing occupation of the Palestinian territory. It is clear that peace and security throughout the Middle East will not be attained without peace between Israel and Palestine.

We reaffirm that the central responsibility for attaining peace lies primarily in the hands of the Palestinian and Israeli people. As part of the international community, we should support and encourage the parties in that endeavour. The international legal framework for those negotiations has been set. They include the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, to name just a few.

In conclusion, while the parties and the international community dither, the humanitarian situation, particularly in Gaza, is further deteriorating. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) represents one of the concrete steps that the Organization has taken to alleviate the suffering of the people on the ground. We therefore appeal to the international community to support UNRWA. That will ensure that the Agency continues to provide its services, especially in the light of the severe and recurring financial shortfalls that continue to affect its programmes. We would like to emphasize that funding for UNRWA should be sustainable, predictable and sufficient.

The President: I now call on the observer of the observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): The delegation of the Holy See would like to express its appreciation

to the States Members of the United Nations for their commitment to protecting the Palestinian civilian population and all civilian populations, averting new rounds of violence and promoting dialogue and negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians on the peace process.

The Holy See would like to echo the concern that Pope Francis has voiced in the face of the escalation of tensions in the Holy Land and in the Middle East, and his great sorrow for the victims and wounded in closeness to all who suffer. As we have repeatedly experienced, war begets war and violence begets violence, and the spiral of violence deviates even further from the path of peace, dialogue and negotiation. The fact is that peace is a vital requirement for the full enjoyment of all human rights by all. Every human being has the right to enjoy peace and see it restored in the shortest possible time.

The Holy See recently had occasion to point out that the Fourth Geneva Convention puts the protection of civilians at the heart of international humanitarian law. The 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions significantly improved the legal protection covering civilians and the wounded. It is therefore a humanitarian imperative to avoid targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure as a tactic of conflict, as well as the politicization and militarization of humanitarian aid.

The Holy See therefore calls once again for the courage to say yes to encounters and no to conflict; yes to dialogue and no to violence; yes to negotiations and no to hostilities; yes to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation; and yes to sincerity and no to duplicity. All of that takes courage, strength and tenacity. The Holy See would like to renew its appeal for wisdom and prudence to prevail in order to prevent new additional elements of tension in a global panorama that is already convulsed and marked by many cruel conflicts.

There can be no doubt that the Holy City of Jerusalem is a place of great religious significance, not only for the inhabitants of the Holy Land but also for the worshippers of the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions all over the world. For that reason, the Holy See reiterates what it already expressed during the 37th plenary meeting of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, held on 21 December 2017, that it is

> "the obligation of all nations to respect the historical status quo of the holy city, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions"

and

> "that only an internationally guaranteed status can preserve its unique character and be an assurance of dialogue and reconciliation for peace in the region" (*A/ES-10/PV.37, p.17*).

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, entitled "Protection of the Palestinian civilian population".

In connection with the draft resolution, the General Assembly has before it a draft amendment, circulated in document A/ES-10/L.24. In accordance with rule 90 of the rules of procedure, the Assembly shall first take a decision on the draft amendment.

I call on the representative of Algeria on a point of order.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): On behalf of all the sponsors of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, under rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I would like to put forward a no-action motion regarding draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24.

Since the draft amendment, submitted by the delegation of the United States of America, has not been presented to all Member States for consideration in discussion, we believe that its introduction today at the General Assembly is not relevant to our meeting and might divert the General Assembly from the main purpose, which is the adoption of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, which calls for the protection of Palestinian civilians, among other things. In addition, we believe that all issues are covered in our draft resolution. Moreover, as it stands, the draft amendment would undermine the ongoing efforts for reconciliation between all Palestinians, and therefore hamper any prospects for the already remote possibility of a resumption of the peace process.

I insist, on behalf of all the sponsors, that the goal of the draft resolution is solely the protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and the practical measures that the Secretary-General would propose to the General Assembly to that end. I therefore

ask the whole membership to vote in favour of this no-action motion.

The President: The representative of Algeria has moved, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken on draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24. Rule 74 reads as follows:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

In accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure, I now call on the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have asked for the floor in support of the no-action motion put forward by the representative of Algeria under rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the draft amendment contained in document A/ES-10/L.24.

The draft amendment proposed by the delegation of the United States is unacceptable and inappropriate, as it affects the balance and distorts the essence and objective of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, entitled "Protection of the Palestinian civilian population". I repeat: "Protection of the Palestinian civilian population". Moreover, it is contrary to the goal of the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which is to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population from the aggressor, the occupying Power of Palestinian territory. The delegation of Cuba therefore supports the no-action motion presented by the representative of Algeria on the draft amendment introduced by the representative of the United States. We call on the entire membership to vote in favour of the motion.

(*spoke in English*)

I will repeat it in English. We call on the entire membership to vote in favour of the no-action motion.

The President: In accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure, I now call on the representative of the United States.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): This attempt to obstruct a vote on a draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) proposed by the United States is shameful. I call on all Member States to oppose this motion and vote no.

The fact that some Member States believe that condemning Hamas does not even deserve a vote is astounding. Denying a vote on the United States draft amendment would be the height of this organ's hypocrisy. The General Assembly would be taking direct action to silence the United States. Nothing in our draft amendment is controversial. It condemns Hamas for launching rockets, diverting resources to build military infrastructure and obstructing humanitarian aid. Those are issues on which we should be united in condemning Hamas. This motion suggests that these issues are not even worthy of a vote in the General Assembly. What are members afraid of in voting on the draft amendment?

Those who vote to stop action on the United States draft amendment are voting against condemning Hamas. They cannot claim to be against the actions of Hamas and still deny a vote on the draft amendment. Furthermore, the United States recalls the basic principle that the General Assembly should consider a legitimate and relevant matter proposed by a Member State. On that basis, the vote on the United States draft amendment should go forward.

I urge all Member States to vote no on this no-action motion. Our draft amendment takes a biased and unbalanced draft resolution (A/ES-10/L.23) and pushes it in the right direction. Most of all, the draft amendment recognizes the reality of the situation on the ground and the reality of the actions of Hamas that have been counterproductive to peace. The United States again calls on all Member States to oppose the no-action motion.

The President: In accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure, I now call on the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): The delegation of Bangladesh is taking the floor to support the no-action motion proposed by the delegation of Algeria with regard to draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24. The objective and purpose of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23 is to provide, in accordance with the provisions of international law, essential protection to the Palestinian civilian population living under Israel's occupation. We cannot accept a draft amendment that in any way attempts to excuse the killing of peaceful Palestinian

protesters and the violation of their rights and diverges from the objective of ensuring their protection.

The draft resolution is a balanced text that is fully grounded in international law and comprehensively addresses the situation on the ground and all violations against civilians. Attempts to undermine the balance of the text and to shift responsibilities and change its focus cannot be considered genuine efforts to improve the text. We reject that measure and therefore support the no-action motion, and urge all members to vote in favour of it.

The President: In accordance with rule 74 of the rules of procedure, I now call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): Canada is taking the floor to express its disappointment that a no-action motion has been presented on draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24 to draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23, on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population. As a matter of principle, Canada believes that draft resolutions put before the General Assembly deserve to be examined on their merits, as do any draft amendments to them. We understand and respect the fact that Member States have differing views on the draft amendment, and they have every right to express those views through a vote. However, what we cannot accept is the attempt to prevent legitimate debate. Canada will vote against the no-action motion. We ask all Member States, no matter what their views may be on the draft amendment itself, to vote against it as well on principle.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the motion submitted by the representative of Algeria that no action be taken on the draft amendment contained in document A/ES-10/L.24.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Uganda

The motion was rejected by 78 votes to 59, with 26 abstentions.

The President: Since the motion for no action has not been adopted, in accordance with rule 90 of its rules of procedure, the Assembly shall now proceed to take a decision on draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Chad, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Viet Nam

Draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24 was rejected by 58 votes to 62, with 42 abstentions.

The President: May I remind the delegations that rule 84 of the rules of procedure reads as follows:

> "Decisions of the General Assembly on amendments to proposals relating to important questions, and on parts of such proposals put to the vote separately, shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting."

The draft amendment contained in document A/ES-10/L.24 is not adopted.

I call on the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): Under rule 71 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the United States calls a point of order.

The required majority for the adoption of draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24 is a simple majority of those present and voting. Because the draft amendment received a simple majority of those present and voting, I request that you, Mr. President, rule that the draft amendment was adopted. The amendment was adopted.

The President: I will suspend the meeting for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 5.10 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

The President: I announced the outcome of the voting on the basis of rule 84 of the rules of procedure, which states that

> "Decisions of the General Assembly on amendments to proposals relating to important questions, and on parts of such proposals put to the vote separately, shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting".

The delegation of the United States has appealed against the ruling of the President. Pursuant to rule 71 of the rules of procedure, the appeal shall be immediately put to the vote and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.

I give the floor to the representative of the United States.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): The United States appeals your ruling, Mr. President, under rule

71. The United States requests that the appeal be put to a vote, and we thank you, Sir, for that. The United States requests that all delegations vote in favour of this appeal of the President's ruling.

The President: As I announced, the delegation of the United States has appealed against the ruling of the President. Pursuant to rule 71 of the rules of procedure, the appeal shall be immediately put to the vote and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting.

I shall therefore put the appeal made by the delegation of the United States to the vote.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bhutan, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Panama, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uganda, Vanuatu, Viet Nam

The appeal against the President's ruling was rejected by 72 votes to 66, with 26 abstentions.

The President: The President's ruling therefore stands.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23.

The draft resolution has closed for e-sponsorship.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. Pollard (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in document A/ES-10/L.23, the following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Comoros, Cuba, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The President: We shall now begin the voting process. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Solomon Islands, Togo, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Austria, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Fiji, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Malawi, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, South Sudan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

*Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.23 was adopted by 120 votes to 8, with 45 abstentions (*resolution ES-10/20*).*

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote after the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): My country voted in favour of resolution ES-10/20 because we believe it is of the utmost importance for the General Assembly to support the protection of civilians as a matter of principle and to underline the pressing need for a political solution.

However, we condemn in the strongest terms the attacks by Hamas on civilian targets in Israel, in contravention of international humanitarian law, and would have preferred a text that clearly reflects its responsibility. That is why we voted in favour of the United States draft amendment A/ES-10/L.24. We urgently call on all parties to take steps immediately to de-escalate the situation and show the utmost restraint in order to avoid any further loss of life.

Ms. Stener (Norway): Norway voted in favour of resolution ES-10/20 because it accords with our long-standing commitment to achieving a negotiated two-State solution between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It is important to us that the resolution calls for full respect by all parties for international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including regarding the protection of civilians. Furthermore, it condemns all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror. It also deplores both the use of any excessive, disproportionate or indiscriminate use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians and the firing of rockets from Gaza against Israeli civilian areas. Despite that, however, the resolution does not sufficiently reflect the complexities of the situation on the ground. It has three main shortcomings.

First, Hamas and other non-State militant groups in Gaza were omitted from the text. Hamas bears a major responsibility for the current instability and regression of development in Gaza. Islamic Jihad and other militant factions are further aggravating an already-tense and dangerous situation by using indiscriminate military force against civilians. The continued activities by those militant groups in building military installations and tunnels run counter to the interest and well-being of the people of Gaza. That should have been reflected in the resolution, and that is why we supported the proposal of the United States.

Secondly, Israel's right to protect its border and defend its territory was also omitted. Norway supports

Israel's legitimate right to defend itself and stresses that the use of force must always be proportionate, limited and necessary as a last resort. That is why we conveyed that it is unacceptable to use live ammunition against unarmed protesters in Gaza.

Thirdly, the protection mechanism referred to in paragraphs 8, 9 and 15 of the resolution remains vague and creates unrealistic expectations, although the resolution provides the Secretary-General sufficient discretion to suggest the content and direction of such a mechanism. Those three shortcomings, however, do not outweigh the constructive messages in the resolution.

Improving the situation for the people of Gaza remains a top priority for us as the Chair of the donor group for Palestine, or the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians. Gaza must remain an integrated part of Palestine, but to ensure its full integration, the situation must improve politically and economically. The Palestinian Authority must return to Gaza, access and movement restrictions should be lifted and economic measures affecting the population in Gaza should be halted.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Australia expresses its deep regret and sadness at the loss of life and injury that occurred during the protests in Gaza. Australia remains extremely concerned about the situation in the Gaza Strip, particularly the humanitarian outlook. We encourage Member States to provide certainty and predictability for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to enable it to continue to deliver services in the Gaza Strip.

Australia agrees with aspects of resolution ES-10/20. We support the right to peaceful protest and respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law. We agree that the firing of rockets from Gaza towards civilian areas of Israel is reprehensible and completely unacceptable. However, the resolution fails to refer to some significant matters.

It is a significant concern that the resolution fails to mention Hamas by name or to address concerns about the role of Hamas in the Gaza protests. The failure to adopt the draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) referring to the role of Hamas reflects the one-sided nature of the current resolution. The resolution also fails to mention Israel's legitimate security concerns and its need to protect its own population.

We are also concerned about the fact that the resolution's request for a report on civilian protection options is expressed vaguely and that the possibility of an international mechanism may raise unrealistic expectations.

For those reasons, Australia voted against the resolution. However, we are steadfast in our vision for peace. Australia remains committed to a two-State solution and a future in which Israel and a Palestinian State exist side by side in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

Mrs. Chatardova (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic endorses the statement by the observer of the European Union delivered before the voting.

We decided to abstain in the voting on resolution ES-10/20, on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population, because, in our view, it does not contribute to the much-needed de-escalation of the situation on the ground. Its one-sided approach will add to the perception of inequity, injustice and an atmosphere of mistrust between both parties. Such an unbalanced message, which fails to reflect the complexity of the situation in Gaza or mention the destructive role of Hamas, cannot bring the Israelis and Palestinians closer to the negotiating table. In that vein, the Czech Republic fully supported the draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) proposed by the United States.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation voted in favour of resolution ES-10/20 because the international community should continue to stand firm in support of Palestinian rights and reject and condemn in the strongest terms all the brutal acts committed by the Israeli army, the latest example of which was the killing of more than 100 Palestinian civilians and the wounding of thousands more in the Gaza Strip, including the deliberate killing of Razan Al-Najjar, a 25-year-old Palestinian paramedic who was wearing a high-visibility medical jacket indicating her status as a medical worker. No one, whatever the circumstances or justifications, is allowed to target a medic helping injured people. That is a war crime and a crime against humanity that flies in the face of the basic norms, rules, regulations and principles of international humanitarian law. It is a flagrant violation of the principles of morality and humanity. The international community must condemn that barbaric crime in the strongest possible terms and ensure international protection for the Palestinians.

The Israeli occupation lies at the centre of all the crises and conflicts in the Middle East and beyond. In order to address the situation, the occupying Power should no longer be allowed to commit all its crimes while enjoying total impunity. It must be compelled to comply with all its obligations. The blockade of the Gaza Strip, which has turned it into world's largest prison, should be lifted. The occupation of all occupied territories must come to an end. And the Palestinians should be supported in establishing their own independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Our meetings today indeed represent the long-standing support of the international community for the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

By proposing a new paragraph to the resolution (A/ES-10/L.24), the United States once again indicated that, with regard to the Israeli regime, it is committed neither to international law, morality or humanity. Rather, it is committed only to Israel and to supporting all of Israel's actions unconditionally.

In conclusion, I would like to put on record that our support for the resolution is without prejudice to our long-standing and constant national position on issues related to the question of Palestine.

Mr. Hawke (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of resolution ES-10/20, since we are deeply concerned about the significant numbers of civilian deaths and causalities in Gaza, particularly among children and health workers. However, New Zealand is disappointed that the resolution did not explicitly condemn the actions of Hamas. Its actions are unacceptable, and it must be held to account. We urge all parties to avoid confrontation and to exercise maximum restraint.

Mr. Gómez Camacho (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): While Mexico abstained in the voting on resolution ES-10/20, we would like to emphasize the importance of ensuring the protection of the Palestinian civilian population. In that regard, we support the request for the Secretary-General to present a report on the possible ways and means for ensuring the protection of Palestinian civilians, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom supports a two-State solution. However, we were not able to vote in favour of resolution ES-10/20 because we considered that it was unbalanced and contained elements that were too vague to be viable. We therefore abstained in the voting.

I want to put on record that we did not agree with the procedural decision, partly owing to rule 85 and past practice. However, I also want to put on record that a majority of States members of the General Assembly voted for the draft amendment contained in document A/ES-10/L.24, which condemns Hamas activity. That is an important precedent for the future.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina shares the concern of the international community about the escalating violence in the Middle East, particularly as a result of the recent serious developments in the Gaza Strip. It is therefore imperative that international law, particularly international human rights law and international humanitarian law, be fully respected and that all the parties refrain from taking steps that threaten the lives of Palestinian and Israeli civilians. All attacks on innocent civilians deserve clear condemnation. In that context, Argentina reiterates its firm condemnation of acts that in recent months have caused the deaths of civilians in the Middle East, in particular in the Gaza Stri, and its desire to take urgent measures to de-escalate the violence and put an end to the suffering of the civilian population. In that regard, all the stakeholders involved should take the necessary measures so that humanitarian assistance can reach those most in need in the Gaza Strip, especially children, women and the elderly.

Resolution ES-10/20, which we have just adopted, reflects many of Argentina's concerns. The fact that my country abstained in the voting should not be interpreted as disregard for the violations of international law. On the contrary, we reiterate our appeal to Israel to fully respect the Geneva Conventions and the other international norms relevant to the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians. The resolution also strongly condemns the attacks against the civilian population. As I have already said, my country resolutely supports such condemnation. However, it should remain clear that any attacks against innocent civilians should also be condemned wherever they occur.

However, my delegation thinks that the language in the resolution concerning rocket attacks by Hamas from the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilian targets is

not sufficiently strong or forceful. It also differentiates between Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

Those are the reasons that my delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution. Regrettably, our concerns were not taken into account in the text. In the current circumstances, the lack of prospects for a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a concern shared by the majority of the international community, as has been expressed on various occasions both in the General Assembly and in other United Nations bodies. Argentina reiterates that a negotiated solution that envisages the establishment of two States living in peace and security within safe and internationally recognized borders is the only path to realizing the legitimate aspirations of the Israelis and the Palestinians. All of us here should renew our commitment so that the peace talks can resume as soon as possible and thereby put an end to the conflict, which has sadly lasted for so many decades.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): As a party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols on the body of legal norms that govern the protection of victims of international and non-international armed conflicts, Guatemala believes them to be the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. The Geneva Conventions and their protocols establish clear rules with regard to ways to resolve disputes and minimize their effects. In accordance with article 1 of the Conventions, we therefore respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances.

Guatemala shares the concern of the international community about the intensification of the violence against innocent civilians, including terrorist acts and all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction. We are concerned about the serious situation in the Gaza Strip. However, we believe that resolution ES-10/20 does not provide a comprehensive resolution of the crisis. It is not balanced with regard to Israel and does not set out the conditions necessary for initiating credible negotiations so as to achieve a broad, just and lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. Guatemala therefore abstained in the voting today.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): This vote comes at a critical time for the people of Gaza, who continue to suffer a dire humanitarian crisis, and for Israeli citizens, who recently found themselves once again seeking shelter from rockets and mortars. Canada deplores and is gravely concerned about the violence in the Gaza Strip, which has led to a tragic loss of life and many wounded, including civilians, members of the media, first responders and children.

Canada agrees that all parties must respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Canada is concerned that resolution ES-10/20 does not explicitly refer to the role played by Hamas in the recent violence in Gaza or call on Hamas to cease its violent activity and provocative actions against Israel. That is why we supported the proposed amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) put forward by the United States, which would have made that explicit.

Hamas has been oppressing Palestinians. Hamas and other terrorist groups have been inciting violence unaided. That should be clear in resolution ES-10/20. The resolution explicitly names Israel while failing to explicitly name any other groups involved. In line with its long-standing position, Canada hoped that such a resolution would more accurately reflect the situation on the ground and support the conditions necessary for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel.

For those reasons, Canada abstained in the voting on resolution ES-10/20. Canada stands ready to assist and work closely with its international partners to address this situation and work towards improving the lives of Gazans.

Ms. Sigurdardottir (Iceland): Iceland continues to be deeply concerned over the situation on the border between Israel and Gaza and regrets the loss of life. The protection of civilians is a cornerstone of international humanitarian law. We urge political leaders on both sides to exercise restraint and avoid further violence and casualties.

While we would like to stress that Israel has the right to defend itself under attack and secure its borders against violent incursion, the exercise of that right must be proportionate. The use of live ammunition and the number of fatal casualties raises serious questions on the proportionality of the response. We continue to support an independent and transparent investigation into recent incidents. At the same time, we urge Palestinian leaders not to inflame the situation further. Any demonstration must be peaceful. Those who intentionally place civilians in harm's way are in breach of international law.

On that basis, we decided to support resolution ES-10/20, although we would have preferred a text that sought a better balance with regard to the concerns just raised. We therefore also supported the proposed draft amendment (A/ES-10/L.24) put forward by the United States.

Iceland is committed to a two-State solution where Israel and a Palestinian State exist side by side in peace and security. That objective will not be reached if Israel continues its settlement policies and its blockade of Gaza, and if Hamas continues to use its position in Gaza to fan the flames of radicalism. It is urgent to ensure that a peace process is put back on track. Otherwise, we run the risk of the violence continuing and conditions deteriorating even further.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): My delegation would like to make the following points to explain our decision to abstain in the voting on resolution ES-10/20.

In our view, the resolution does not sufficiently reflect the complex situation on the ground. Singapore is deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in Gaza, including the civilian casualties arising from violence along the Israel-Gaza border. Singapore maintains its principled position on the primacy of the protection of civilians during times of conflict and the necessity for all sides to exercise restraint and reduce tensions.

At the same time, we acknowledge Israel's right to self-defence and to protect its civilian population. We urge all parties involved to exercise restraint and to do their utmost to protect civilians on both sides of the border, while taking urgent steps to de-escalate the situation. All have the responsibility to bring an end to the violence and restore calm.

Singapore also reaffirms its position in support of a negotiated two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

In accordance with the terms of paragraph 17 of resolution ES-10/20, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.